The Testimony of an American Citizen in France

1914–1915

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PREAMBLE

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Before beginning my lecture I have to acquit myself of an agreeable task; I can well say that all France has confided it to me, since it consists of thanking you in her name for the unceasing generosity of which the United States has given proof since the declaration of war. This room is filled with people who have largely contributed to alleviate the sufferings of France and her Allies. Will they be kind enough to transmit to their absent friends the part of thanks which is their due? Your kind acts are not lost, you have gained solid gratitude.

I will speak to you longer if you will permit me on this theme another day; on all that has been done, all that remains to be done and the practical results of your charitable efforts.

To-day, I consider it as a duty before all others to pronounce first, these words which come from the very heart of France and address themselves to the very heart of America!

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TESTIMONY OF AN AMERICAN CITIZEN

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am devotedly fond of France, because she appears to me to be the gathering together of everything that is amiable; of beauty, of generosity, of loyalty, of liberty, of justice., because she unites grace and strength, courage and gentleness, patience and folly. I am fond of her because she has virtues that are not arrogant, because she consents very often to redeem these virtues by faults which I must confess are attractive, and finally because she does not know what mediocrity means and that throughout her history she always proved to be exceptional in her merits as in her faults. The great essential in life for nations as well as for individuals is not to be commonplace. We would do well to remember this for ourselves! France has a quality of soul altogether unique. She is never vulgar; she is a country by herself, a country that one does not find, so to speak, on every street corner. She is an object for a connoisseur of beauty, an exquisite bibelot and it is proper to cherish her in the light of a masterpiece. You know the attachment which I have always had for her, and this attachment has been greatly fortified during the sixteen months that I have lived her life of struggle and of valor.

Some people have been astonished that I have found we have not always rendered her sufficient credit for her extraordinary energy, that we have not sustained her in the cause of which she is a champion; in other words, that I have exaggerated. They say that one should adopt a more reserved attitude and not always distribute praise at the same address. I would invoke as an excuse, if I needed one, this principle which has directed all my life: "my friends are never in the wrong because they are my friends!" It is true that I would have taken her part blindly even though she had been in the wrong but knowing that she is in the right, I am capable of upholding her even in cold blood.

It is just sixteen months that I took the first steamer leaving New York after the declaration of war so as not to be in the distance when France was in danger. I had found in her during peaceful times a welcome so gentle, so cordial that for me it was a sort of duty to give and to partake of her hopes and of her anxieties. It was impossible to permit myself to witness from a distance the aggression with which she was threatened and I could not resist the desire to go and join my friends at the moment when they were being cynically attacked. I thought that I could make myself useful by putting at the disposition of our traditional friends my good will, my heart, my thought and my words; my conception of neu-

trality has never been to tolerate crime without protesting and, at the moment of embarking, Belgium was already invaded. We were already accepting, without flinching, the worst of attacks against the rights of man. A French dramatic author appreciates thus the characteristic of one of his heroes "he keeps silent; he keeps silent; he keeps silent; one cannot stop him." We also were silent at that time and the future has proved that no one can stop us either.

On board of the *Lorraine* there was but one other American and 800 reservists who had decided from the very first moment to put themselves at the disposition of their country. They were all full of 'go' and enthusiasm and there one had the first sight of the magnificent ardor with which a people can leave their comforts, abandon their business, their family joys, when they feel that they are to defend the superior interests of justice, the patrimony of humanity and the soil of their ancestors. There were amongst all these fine fellows a certain number of deserters, of insubordinates, who had, for one reason or another, crossed the ocean to find with us a refuge from the gendarmes. From the first moment when they realized that it no longer was the mere game of war but war itself that was on, that they were no longer asked to apprentice themselves to discipline, but that they had to submit for the very existence of their country, these hard-lots,

at the risk of imprisonment to which they were liable, never hesitated to expose themselves to the rigor of the law. Their one hope was that they would be placed in the most dangerous positions in order to pay for their passed sins. Many were afraid of being placed in prison on arrival and confided to me their anxiety on this score, but not one of them had hesitated before this possibility, for they thought that at this moment of peril, if they had only one chance to be permitted to take up arms this chance they ought to take!

During the whole of the crossing they were very worried and they fully expected on landing to be taken by the law, no such thing happened, however, and we all went together to the Chief of Police at Havre for our permits to enter. I remember distinctly the Brigadier turning to them and saying in the most polite manner "et vous Messieurs, vous êtes les deserteurs?" Upon the affirmative reply, and being asked for what point they wished their safe conducts, they all answered with enthusiasm "Luneville." That is to say on the Eastern frontier, on the border line of Alsace-Lorraine. The French instincts had been awakened in them, and at the first cry of alarm these irregular citizens had fallen into line, thus proving that they had acted before under the force of a rebellious spirit which is a characteristic of the French temperament, but, in the face of danger they showed that they could be absolutely counted upon.

One must never let oneself be misled in the French appearance of frivolity and of indifference to convention; the Germans indeed have found it out to their expense, most happily! The changes in French character, as even Caesar noted, reserve extraordinary surprise, and all the weathercocks on the steeples of France know in the hour of need how to orient themselves in the direction where appears at the same time the hereditary danger and the light which indicates where the line of duty lies! Towards the East! !

On arriving in Paris we found everywhere the trace of the patriotic fever which from one day to another had given to all hearts the same unison of enthusiasm! The Paris which we have all known as so sceptical and frivolous had become a city of fervor. The flags waved under the breath of idealism!

It was the hour of the first and too-easy victories, the hour of the ever-hoped-for revenge, when every Parisian walking through the street felt that he was taking a step in the direction of Strassburg. The mobilization had been made in the most masterful manner. In forty-eight hours all the troops of the first line had been sent to their posts and all along the railways where were rushing the flower bedecked trains, the veterans, the guardians of the bridges and the crossings, saluted with their time-worn caps the youths of France going to their death singing.

Alas in a few days the fortunes of war precipitated a retreat of the Allied armies. In the north the French, the English and the Belgians gave ground before superior forces wonderfully equipped and organized. From Charleroi they retreated to Lille and to Arras. In the East it was necessary to give up the first conquests, too fast and too uncertain. A wonderful resistance was sustained by General Castelneau before Nancy and there the advance of the enemy was stopped, but in the center, the line had weakened, and the wonderful hills of Champagne were invaded! Reims was taken by the enemy and the roads towards Paris were open! At this moment of distress Paris presented an unforgetable aspect. One part of the population fearful of the victorious advance of the Germans followed the Government, who, on the advice of the General in Chief, had resolved to proceed to Bordeaux, to preserve in face of possible eventualities its liberty of action. The other half kept the greatest calmness and awaited events with confidence.

What pathetic days! The Germans advance: hour by hour they approach! They are coming down the valleys and their troops in long and heavy procession are following along the natural lines of the rivers. Here they are at Compiegne! Now they are at Senlis! Now at Chantilly and at Meaux.

From the hotel at which I had my room in Paris, I heard distinctly at dawn of the decisive day, the far-off rumbling roar of cannon. I will always remember that morning! The sky was peaceful and before me lay the Louvre in all its historic splendor; on the left, the straight line which leads to the Arch of Triumph, and on the right, Old Paris, Notre-Dame, where prayers are being offered for the safety of the city. The thought that came over one was this: Is it believable that all this beauty and majesty will be destroyed by a horde, still drunk with the wines they have plundered in Champagne? Is it possible for men who have pushed to the highest point an organization of barbarism, to destroy and to mutilate the monuments that have been erected by this people, the most civilized in the world, the one to whom Europe owes the creation and organization of liberty? Because, undoubtedly, if they do push as far as here, there are a thousand chances to one, that they will wreak the vengence of their hatred and jealousy on these venerable and glorious relics. I firmly believe that they would have followed such a course: I know that an officious, if I do not say official, warning was addressed from Berlin to Paris by the intermediary of a neutral capital to warn the Americans in Paris that it would be wiser for them to get out, and as a matter of fact, a notice appeared in the newspapers the next day, advising us to move as quickly as possible. Why should Ger-

many, counting her chickens before they were hatched, why should she have honored us in her kindness if she had not forseen and premeditated the horrors that her army would commit upon entering the city? Why if it was not to be able to say in the case of disaster—as later, at the moment of the sinking of the *Lusitania*—"your blood be upon your own head, it was your own fault, you were warned."

As for Paris, I still see myself the prey of my anxiety. What would one not give to be able to protect all this beauty which lay before me; to animate its stones in order that they might defend themselves, change by magic every window in the Louvre into a battlement! I suffered for these stones as one suffers for flesh about to be mutilated! For are they not the flesh of time, the creatures and souls of centuries, do they not personify as human effort the symbol of eternity?

General Gallieni, at that moment military Governor of Paris, on whom the heavy task had fallen of saving these glories for the sake of France and of the world, had posted upon the walls that wonderfully short and virile poster "J'ai reçu le mandat de defendre Paris contre l'envahisseur. Ce mandat je le remplirai jusqu'au bout: Gallieni." "I have received the order to defend Paris against the invader. I will carry out this order to the end."

The words of this great soldier fortified all hearts. We took confidence, but, should the worst

happen, what then? Already in the fifth and sixth centuries the Vandals came to Paris and destroyed all the marvels existing, of which to-day nothing remains but the merest vestiges. I thought also of Greece and Italy, alike ravaged by hordes without pity. What already had been seen were we going to see it again? The worst of trials; are they in store for this calm population who is striving by the dignity of its attitude and its activity to thwart the latent tragedy?

It was not to be so! Destiny changes direction suddenly. Gallieni carries all his forces to the north of the city; he mobilizes all the taxis in order to transport his troops more rapidly to the limits of the entrenched camp. General Manoury accomplishes marvels. Generals Foch, Maud'huy, De l'Angle, Franchet, d'Esperey, and many others, accomplished along the line great feats of military science, and Joffre, firm as a rock, presides over the destinies of all the armies.

The Germans hesitate. Their attempt to envelop Paris is lost. Joffre has given the order "retreat no further, conquer or die!" and they conquered for it is not written that France shall perish! This is the moment of the Marne! Paris has survived, and other days will dawn on the Louvre unblemished.

Alas, it was impossible to prevent the realization of other nightmares! I have visited Reims, Arras, Ypres, pitiable sights, that show the im-

possibility of withholding barbaric custom when such custom is instinctive and hereditary.

I have been over the battle fields where the French lay dead beside the Germans. The first filled me with envy because they had fallen for the noblest of all causes! The second filled me with pity; they seemed to have been sacrificed for the most criminal of ambitions.

I have seen the graves strewn over the fields with a cap or a helmet crowning their little wooden cross and have wondered that the French in their generosity have reserved for these German invaders and despoilers sepulchres as carefully taken care of as those of their own soldiers. I have met refugees of the invaded countries, and have sympathized with their miseries which we must continue to alleviate. I have listened to their expressions of deep gratitude towards their benefactors; I have seen in the still bombarded towns the courageous population, generally existing underground, but always smiling and cheerful, those that could not or would not flee, and, besides these visions often splendid but always sad, it has been given to me to witness other visions more inspiring and more invigorating. I have chatted with the French trooper, the foot soldier, the '*Piou Piou*,' the 'little French soldier,' to whom we will owe in the near future the victory of Right and the preservation of our own Liberty. I have been with him in the trenches,

always jolly, always smiling, always *'Gavroche.'* I can testify that there is nothing more noble, more touching than the intimacy without familiarity which reigns between the officers and the soldiers. It is a *camaraderie* that not at any moment encroaches upon discipline. A deep solicitude in the chiefs as regards their inferiors! It is a most extraordinary example of solidarity and equality before death in a people who are fighting for a holy cause. You will look in vain amongst the commanders of the French army for the arrogance of the Germans, or in their ranks for the automatic submission to fear. You will find yourself before a people who are Free, who fight freely, and who understand fully the responsibility of the leaders, instead of having to obey as slaves who serve through intimidation or who bow themselves before the iron hand. All the difference between these two people is this. On the one side the spontaneous and individual spirit of sacrifice, the most perfect development of independent courage, while on the other, the sacrifice by order and the most perfect development of imposed *bravoure*. I know nothing finer than the look of the French soldier. His straightforward, his frank and resolute, enthusiastic look as he receives an order from his superior is an example of the fraternal feelings between the men and the officers. And what a sense of humor, mingled with a disdain of danger! I have seen them in the

trenches while under bombardment hold out their caps in the hopes of catching a piece of shrapnel. What disgusts them is the dirty and disloyal methods of the actual war as practiced by their enemy. "What annoys me," said to me one day, General Castelnau, "is to know how to fight such people, they seem to have no decency, no mercy, no honor." This, because it is the methods of Germany that have imposed themselves in this war, and, let me say, it is above all the neutrals who are responsible for the prolongation of these methods, in as much as we, the neutrals, have never protested against their usage and have thus assisted passively at the breaking of laws of war and the perpetration of most evident crimes.

To take up this question must I again mention the tiresome violation of Belgium? Yes, I must, because up to the present time we have, at least officially, the air of ignoring it. Perhaps some day, the government will acknowledge that this is an accomplished fact and may then decide to be indignant. In the meantime, let *us* acknowledge it and let *us* be indignant in its place. Must I quote again the tiresome chapter of German atrocities? Yes! I must. Since officially, at least, the United States seems not to know of them, and yet atrocities proven and established by undisputable documents, even those of the German soldiers themselves are numberless.

Assassination of prisoners and wounded, pillage, destruction by fire, use of forbidden projectiles, employment of fiery liquids and asphyxiating gases, bombardments of open towns, Zeppelin and aeroplane raids against civil populations, not to speak of the crimes of the submarines. I have had in my hands the proofs and have witnessed that the Germans have not refrained before any of these miserable crimes.

Perhaps, later, our government may discover that the origin of the rules and conventions in time of war is American. It dates from the year 1863, and the birth of it is found in a work entitled "The instructions in 1863 for the armies of U. S. while in campaign." Now it must be remembered that, in time of war all conventions and treaties cease, *except* those established for time of war. Therefore, these conventions are called upon to be respected, and who is to see they are respected unless it be the neutrals, that is to say, the referees or umpires of the struggle who are the only ones capable of judging the blows that are fair and the blows that are foul, and is it not our fault, the fault of the neutrals, if the Allies are constrained to ultimately follow to the same methods, since by our indifference we have not had the courage to impose upon the Germans the cessation of their infamies.

It would seem to be about time for us to have a healthy conception of the duties of neutrality.

I cite this page for the information of those who read, mark, learn and inwardly digest, from a work of a jurist-consult.

"Governments have in all liberty accepted and signed for methods which they have considered the best from the point of view of their duty. They have sworn to use them in their controversies. These rules are afterwards contemptibly discarded by several of the contracting parties. This contempt, should it be treated with indifference by those to whom it does not actually cause suffering? I say, no! I say that they have at least the right and the duty to protest against the violation of the word of honor given by all the contracting parties, that it is a *necessary* part of the obligation incurred which otherwise risks of being void, if repudiated.

"It is not only justice, it is interest which is at stake. The observance of conventions agreed to is of universal interest because if not, how is one to find security anywhere? The state which happens to be the victim can indeed say to each one of the other states remaining outside of the struggle; 'To-day, it is true, it is my turn, but, to-morrow, remember, it will be yours'."

What answer is there to this, may I ask? Is it not logic and truth itself?

Compare now our attitude to the one which this honest man proposes. Note well that he does not even suggest that the neutrals take part in the

struggle but simply, officially pronounce themselves. In place of that we tolerate the crimes committed against all international treaties, crimes of which our own citizens are the victims! We watch waitingly! We are too proud to insist even. From time to time we send a note! I must say that we do not care how much we spend on paper, but of our honor, do we care for that? Or is it a term that no longer has any meaning; that no longer accommodates itself to the cynical and realistic necessities of our time. Our interest, do we take care of that? Remember "to-day it is my turn, but to-morrow it will be yours."

Let us write this maxim over our doors and if we have not the honesty, in as much as we are neutrals and umpires, to raise our hand in warning against the adversary that breaks all the rules of the game, uses felonious methods and goes even to crime in order to get the better of the struggle, at least the simple instinct of self-preservation dictates to us our line of conduct and brings us to ward off the final blow which one of these days will fall upon us and which really is falling on us now.

I am full well aware that after the affair of the *Lusitania* we carried off a diplomatic victory. We sent a note and we received one in return and then the *Arabic* was torpedoed, amongst others, and finally the *Ancona*. On board the *Ancona* there were twenty American citizens lost; to be sure they were but Armenians who had been

naturalized in the hopes of escaping Turkish atrocities. Nevertheless they were American citizens and it would appear from the happenings that American citizens at sea do not run very much less danger than Turkish citizens on land. In the answer received from Germany to our notes, I have heard, it is announced that a certain sum will be paid for the lives of the Americans lost in these various disasters. There is one thing I fervently pray and that is that Blood Money will be refused—it seems too pitiable. It seems too indecent to fix the tariff on human life. Are we not rich enough ourselves, not to accept the money offered in indemnity for such miserable crimes? Are we not sufficiently provided with the world's goods to take care of the families of those who are lost? Do we really believe that everything has a price and that one can treat an affair of honor as one treats an affair of munitions? We have all over the world the reputation of being a commercial nation. It has its advantages —but people are reproaching us already too much for profits which the actual situation is inevitably bringing to us. But there is a limit! The Government is not only charged to avoid getting us into war, it has also the choice of the manner of preserving, and the responsibility of, our dignity, and they must understand that there are questions of sentiment which cannot be regulated on a money basis. I am convinced that speaking the way

I do, I interpret the intimate thought of the vast majority of my fellow citizens. I would indeed be sorry if it were possible to think otherwise. I have the conviction that all real Americans in their inward inwardness feel an uncomfortable unrest when they open their newspapers in the morning and see the manner in which we are playing at hide and seek, the suppleness with which we get out the way and the humiliating ingeniousness with which our masters use our name to obtain satisfaction at any price and to attenuate by their cleverness of tongue or by seeming solutions, the aggressive and injurious intentions of Germany. I ask you all if it has not come over you more than once in the last sixteen months to have felt wounded in your self-respect and in your modesty. What has come over us! Who has thus the right to make us hang our heads? We know that we are in the wrong, or at least, through the attitude of our Government, that we have the appearance of a people who are deceiving their conscience. Germany is our enemy as she is the enemy of all *Free* people. We have nothing in common with those who base their grandeur upon pillage and upon terror, with those who taking the name of liberty in vain have annexed by violence Alsace, Lorraine, Slesvig-Holstein, Bosnia, Herzogovinia, Triest and the Trent, with those who have cowardly invaded glorious Belgium and are now strangling gallant little

Serbia. All our past, all our traditions protest against such actions! Spoliation, brutality, intimidation, such are the methods which Germany has continually chosen to spread out her Empire and proclaim her power. Two of these methods—brutality and intimidation—are daily employed against ourselves. Suppose for one instance that our Ambassador, Mr. Gerard, should behave himself in Berlin, under similar existing conditions, as Mr. von Bernstorff has in New York and Washington. How much time do you suppose the German Government would stand for it, and, when they had asked him to mind his own business, and packed him back to us with, or probably without, the honors due to his rank, as they did with Monsieur Cambon, would we not be the first in our good common sense to say, "it serves us jolly well right"? But our patience it seems has not yet been put to a sufficient test. Dr. Dumba, however, who has an idea of what the limits are, has expressed himself on his return to his native land with a frankness that we must almost admire. He has published his opinion on our attitude and that of our Government and this is what he has said:

"Mr. Wilson and Mr. Lansing will end by making the United States ridiculous!" We might almost believe him for certainly he was our guest long enough to form a pretty fair judgment.

Has the moment not come when we must speak out and put an end to German insolence? All our

principles and traditions point out to us to contribute morally, and without reserve, to the great work which the Allies have undertaken. We who have given our blood for emancipation of the Blacks, are we going to remain indifferent when this time it is the question of the emancipation of the Whites? I wish by this to say that Germany dreams of a universal serfdom and she is searching to install by all the means in her power, her domination, financially, commercially, industrially, morally and physically; by insidious infiltration through naturalization, by shameless propaganda, and, when the moment seems to have arrived, by the brutal attempt to impose herself through her military despotism. Some day, no doubt, we will know the complete development of her plan and her whole program will be applied to us, to the very limit, if we have not the foresight to take warning; if we do not profit by the occasion which the present war furnishes to stop forever her tyrannical arrogance. We must be blind not to see that we are directly interested in the defeat of Germany, and this blindness may finish by costing us dear.

There is a man, who a long time ago, admirably understood and defined the error which we are now committing in holding ourselves officially outside of the struggle without daring to assume our moral responsibilities. This man of whom we speak is really one of our family, because he is a Frenchman and he contributed, perhaps more than any-

body else, to our struggle for freedom. His name was Beaumarchais. Listen to this gentleman who speaks to his government at the moment when in 1776 we were fighting for our liberties and while France seemed to be hesitating as to helping us—"It is absolutely useless to continue to do as we are doing, or, better still, what we are *not* doing, to remain any longer passive; to continue in our obstinate determination not to take any part and to await the solution without acting. The worst policy is to remain without taking any action whatever;" and, further on, he says, "but let us fear to waste in idle deliberations the only moment left for acting, and while spending our precious time in always saying, it is '*too soon*,' let us fear that soon we shall be forced to cry out with sadness 'Heavens, it is too late!' "

We will always find French words to guide us, because there are between the French and ourselves affinities that are eternal. It is in the books of France that we must take the principles of our line of conduct and not in the books of the pendant jurist-consults of Germany.† How many have we seen of those learned men who pass their time in playing with words, arguers, economists, statisticians, legislators, obstructionists of every kind, who are everlastingly raising objections but who are incapable of taking a decision. The people

† I refer here to Mr. Wilson's source of inspiration for his work *The State* as indicated by him in his preface.

who are by no means foolish, have finished by solving their own problems; look at England, who without further occupying herself with their babbling determined promptly to engage the action on the side of honor. This action which I am asking for us, what does it amount to? Does it necessitate our raising an army and sending our fleet? No! a hundred times no! I absolutely insist upon repeating this. We have no reason for putting in line a battalion of men nor a ship. It is necessary only that officially the moral obligations of the United States are no longer played with, that it be known officially once and for all, that the immense majority of our fellow citizens have chosen the side of those who are in the fight for Right and Liberty; those two inseparable principles to which we owe our existence. All I ask and all that the Allies ask is no direct participation in the war, but the official declarations that will show to the world our moral attitude. Are you of the opinion that the actual government interprets by its ambiguous manifestations the sentiment of the United States? No. What, therefore, is a government that does not represent the soul of the people? It is *we* who think, but it is the government which acts, and if it acts, contrary to our wishes, ought we sit by and pretend to be satisfied? Again I say no. In order that there be harmony between the people and the government, either the government must live as the people think or else people must think

as the government lives. Let us be very wary how we lean towards this last solution which leads to all sorts of compromise and all kinds of abdications.

Let us measure the risk we are running of offending Germany. To begin with, she already contends we are offending her; what further would be the result? That we would weaken her before the world by the strength of our moral disapproval; and I have always contended that of all forces of a country, moral, financial and physical, the strongest, the most righteous, is the moral; that she would find herself the next day less formidable for her enemies and for ourselves. Other protestations, would immediately follow ours; the neutral countries of Europe are only awaiting a gesture from us to imitate us. They also have a sufficiency of the Germans' arrogance and tyranny. They also ask secretly for the defeat of Germany. At the present moment there is not one neutral nation who is not hostile to her, but they are the feeble nations, without defense and easy of attack, and do not dare to lift their voices; in place of which, we are a big people, strong and full of resources. Our duty is to put ourselves at the head of the powerless neutrals and to direct the concert of protestations! We undoubtedly lost, at the beginning of the war, an opportunity to play the most magnificent rôle; is this a reason to persevere in our error? That which we did not accomplish in the hesitancy and disorder of the first moment,

is it not possible for us to accomplish now that we are master of the situation, that we have had the time to reflect and after having assisted at crime following crime? Even if we are behind hand let us give the signal of indignation and you will see that we will have immediate followers. The strength of Germany will be diminished of all the approbations and all the mute consents she still wrings through the power of terror. It will be an excellent operation, an operation which responds at the same time to the aspirations of our conscience and to our real and true interests. By disavowing those who have always wished for war, who have conducted it shamefully and without scruple, by closing about them the circle of disdain and disgust, we would impair their forces, that is to say, we hasten the moment towards peace and we diminish our chances of some day having to enter the lists ourselves. It is a great error to think that in taking frankly the part of the Allies we increase our chances of getting drawn into the war. On the contrary, we get further away from it, we perhaps even suppress the day when we will be drawn into this conflict to defend ourselves against an unlimited tyranny; we precipitate the hour of judgment when Germany conquered and disarmed, will be for long years incapable of being harmful. In sustaining with all our moral authority the cause of the Allies we are working towards universal deliverance and in particular, to our own prepara-

tion of future security. Is it to keep in peace that we hesitate before frankness? Is it to maintain our tranquility that we lack courage? I say that we are making a bad bargain and that if we really mean to keep out of the war we *have to dare*. However, as the first principle of all diplomacy is to foresee the worst that can happen, even the least probable, and while in all surety I believe we will not have war, we will at least hold ourselves upon the defensive and we will prepare ourselves for the most uncertain of eventualities. Thus we will draw a profit from circumstances since we put ourselves on record, which is not the actual case, of not fearing anybody. Above all we will create for ourselves, friendships, guarantees for the future. Sooner or later peace will be made and Germany will be beaten; sooner if we lend a hand, later if we remain inert, and what will that peace be if not the commencement of a future war? War a long off, I am ready to agree, but war nevertheless because it is an illusion to think that war will ever come to an end as long as men live, that is to say, as long as rivalry exists!

And in this war, at the same time near and afar off, and which will take place between no one can foresee what adversaries, who can say, that in our turn we will not be involved? And then for the price of our indifference and weakness of today what Allies will we find? It is a false reasoning which consists in saying with satisfaction "We are

so neutral that *all* the world is disgruntled with us." If we could remain neutral and at the same time make ourselves beloved by all the world, I would say "Amen! our egoism does not harm us!" but do you not see that we are isolating ourselves? Is it wiser for us to incur the hostility of *all* of the world, or to assure ourselves of the sympathies of a part of the world? In the position in which we are, we must choose; for we are either going to have both parties on our back or else we are going to get the friendship of one of the parties. The problem is clear, and it is absolutely illusionary, I repeat, to think we can content everybody. Universal hatred may exist but not universal love!

Under these conditions on which side are we going to seek our friends? I think there is no hesitation. Our interests and our inclinations command us to turn toward France. We have not forgotten what we owe her. It is also time to think that tomorrow she will be victorious. I passed sixteen months there and I am certain of all that I saw and say. France and her Allies are sure of their ultimate success. They have immense reserves of men with the possibility of creating for themselves financial resources long after Germany will have emptied hers. They have, thanks to England, whose actual efforts are so admirable, the mastery of the seas of the entire world, which assures them continual breath while Germany is bound to smother between her fron-

tiers; and again they have a confidence which is steadfast and are resolved like one man to fight out to the bitter end. I shrug my shoulders when I am asked if they do not desire peace. There *is indeed somebody* who desires it; however, let us not be duped by appearances; the Germans have carried off undeniable successes! William II is ready to enter Constantinople! but let us reflect. Where did he really want to go? To Paris, to Calais, to Petrograd and having found it impossible to force his way to any of these places, he has turned toward the Orient, and he has broken through the only open door, that of Serbia! Constantinople is a makeshift! The Napoleonic dream of the Kaiser is tumbling down! He is drawing out indefinitely the line of battle of his army which means that he is weakening it. He is rushing from right to left. He is slashing about. He is playing with his elbows to force a passage, but each time he butts into a blind-alley. On the way to Paris, a blind-alley; on the way to Calais, a blind-alley; towards Petrograd, a blind-alley, tomorrow we will see another on the way to Egypt or to India. William has spread himself out and infallibly will exhaust himself; so it was with Napoleon, because he wanted to be at the same time in Lisbon and in Moscow. What the Kaiser is looking for in his weak imitations of the great Emperor, is beyond doubt the island of St. Helena, but, as was said to me by the caricaturist,

Abel Faivre, "he will not even get there, because he has not sufficiently merited it!"

I saw before my departure, General Joffre, at his headquarters; he was kind enough to receive me and talk to me for some twenty minutes. I do not wish to repeat all that he told me but I may quote these textual words of his "Germany will be defeated, and on our front. The wastage of her men is considerable. We see the moment approaching when she will be unable to hold on any longer;" and when Gen. Joffre speaks, no one would for one minute doubt what he says. He is a man of simplicity and straightforwardness, one without any pretension whatsoever, sitting quietly in an arm chair before an empty table, no pomposity and no setting. This man, who is responsible for France and for the entire world, as a matter of fact, has the air of not for a moment knowing it. He gives the impression of calmness and firmness. He is a *rock*. Certainly it is not he who will give in before the end is accomplished.

It is not either Gen. Gallieni whom I saw the day before I embarked. The new minister of war completes marvelously the General-in-chief; he gives the impression in movement and action of great energy, and between these two heroic brothers-in-arms, the most perfect understanding reigns. Gen. Gallieni has also positively decided to follow the struggle up to the moment that the Allies are in a position to dictate their peace.

In passing, I take pleasure in citing a word of his made towards the end of the interview, a word which will flatter the pride of every American. As I was leaving I said to him, "I cannot forget, General, that a little over a year ago you were the only salvation which stood here in Paris between us, the devil and the deep sea" and he replied, "You forget Herrick! and when you next see him give him my compliments. We had indeed many conferences at that critical moment." This homage rendered to our Ambassador whose conduct was so admirable, so full of dignity and *sang-froid* at the moment the Germans were descending on Paris, touched my heart. It will touch yours also, I am sure!

Therefore, France, England, Italy, Belgium, Serbia, Japan and Russia will have nothing to do with a lame peace, and since they do not wish it, they will not have it; but, what must happen is that in their day of triumph we shall be entitled to their gratitude. Do we forget that France has a right to *our* gratitude. I was reading coming over on the steamer the correspondence of LaFayette and I found this page referring to this then struggling country, which will not leave you indifferent. "Defender of this Liberty which I cherish, freer myself than anybody, in coming as a friend to offer my services to this Republic *so interesting*, I bring only my frankness and my good will. No ambition, no personal interest.

In working for my glory I am simply working for their happiness. The happiness of America is intimately associated with the happiness of humanity, she is destined to become the sure refuge of Virtue and Honesty, of Tolerance and of Tranquil Liberty." These are expressions of confidence which must move us even in the days we live in. Do not let us allow them to fall! Let us say in turn that "Defenders of this Liberty which we cherish it becomes our honor that we offer our services (in the measure I have stated) to the Republic of France so interesting, that we bring to her aid our frankness and our good will! Let us say that the happiness of France is intimately bound with the happiness of humanity, and thus let us prove that we *are* indeed the sure and respectable refuge of Virtue and Honesty, Tolerance and Tranquil Liberty."

I hold also to say to you that the sentiments of France as regards the American Nation are excellent. They feel that they owe us a great debt of gratitude; for the offers to do good and alleviate the miseries of war. France is not a country of ingratitude; she practices virtues that undoubtedly can serve us as an example; her tact and her extraordinary sensibility have not given way before her energy. She knows everything that we are doing for her unfortunate children and she knows with what heartfelt enthusiasm we have placed our purse at her disposition. She feels

that in spite of the inertia of our government she possesses with us sympathies which are unfathomable. Her finesse is not the dupe of appearances; she understands perfectly the difference between a people and those who govern them. She is astonished, however, that we do not arrive at imposing upon those who direct us the attitude that is dictated by our hearts. At the beginning I *know* that she counted on us as the arbitrators of the conflict, to avoid that, in the heat of the fight, the control of the tempers of the combatants should be quite lost. She has been deceived. She finds that we are officially indifferent to the attack upon the rights of peoples, and she has shaken her head, while sighing deeply as a sensitive person would, upon constating the failings of friendship. However, she does not judge us with severity, because for her also, *never are her friends altogether in the wrong.* She attempts to find an excuse for us. She says "America is so far off!" but back of this exclamation one feels a sadness and a disillusion. And how can it be otherwise? She thought that we were as she is the champion of Right. Who knows if in the bottom of her soul she does not cherish more severe reproaches. Who knows that she is not straining a point to repress her resentment and that she is not saying to herself inwardly—"They are becoming more prosperous in this our darkest hour." And she invokes perhaps the

shadow of LaFayette who spent for us all that he had, and she says perhaps still further to herself, "I know well that one must not confound a people with its government, but this war happens to be a war of the people. There are fighting by our sides governments who did not wish to enter the line but who were forced to do so by their people. Why did the United States not sustain these nations? Why is their enthusiasm dissimulated? Why do they not by their spontaneous energy force their heads to give us what we desire and what every one of the citizens is ready beyond doubt to grant? That is to say, their moral support! Why do these citizens not oblige those who speak for them to throw aside their ambiguous language and to speak out frankly the generous feelings which animate the mass, the feeling of which we have gathered the proof and charities in the last sixteen months.

Perhaps again she says to herself—"Are their leaders really unreasonable and afflicted with an obscure judgment? Do they not see that Germany is practising all that a Washington and a Jefferson detested? Do not they render an account that Germany must be beaten; that her victory would represent the reduction to serfdom of all the universe to the profit of one, whereas the victory of the Allies will represent a sacrifice of one, the most vile, for the profit of all?" And when the French have made these fair reasonings,

I know that they regain confidence in us and they remember the words of Lincoln—"You can fool all of the people some of the time; you can fool some of the people all of the time, but you cannot fool all of the people all of the time." As a matter of fact, they feel we have men who have resolute and honest minds. A Parisian said to me the other day—"Roosevelt and Bacon have saved the honor of America before the world by their courage." Yes, I know! What Roosevelt says is too true to be nice but do not let us forget that what one Bryan used to say was too nice to be true!

Admirable France, you are worthy of being loved and of being helped. Nobody here can imagine the marvels you have accomplished in the last sixteen months. Patient, valiant, without a murmur while her virile sons are fighting at the front, while more than 20,000 of her priests are on the firing line; she sees in the background her old men, her children, her women, assuming also their part of the battle so that she may be victorious, their part of the fatigue in order that she may not cease to remain beautiful in her suffering. Nurses who are devoting themselves, great ladies and humble ones, young girls and women of the people, old peasants, peasant women of every age who harvest the crops, who sow the seed to nourish the army and the population and who

keep up the fields and the gardens to preserve the beauty of the glorious countrysides!

Admirable France! Our France! Our garden of France! I traversed her the other day in going to Bordeaux, passing through the gentle Isle de France, through the blonde Touraine and through smiling Poitou. Everything was in good order along the way, nothing neglected; the aspect of the plains and of the hills proved what care those left behind were taking of the property of those who had gone, so that, for those happy enough to return, everything will appear as amiable as on their departure—even so that the dead may rest assured that their patrimony has not suffered; and I passed by houses where they were weeping without my knowing it because all of the houses along the road had the appearance of happy homes.

Admirable France! Our France! where sorrow is as brave as joy, where the beings are superior to their destiny and have not the air of believing in their unhappiness! Shall we not cry out to her that we are with her? Shall we not have the remorse of our failings? The device of LaFayette was *Cur Non?* Why not? That is a Latin quotation which seems to me fit for America. *Cur Non?* Why not? I ask you?

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